

LOADSTAR LETTER #52

Arkanix Labs Drops Commodore Support

On an Email tip, the LOADSTAR Letter investigated a rumor that Arkanix Labs could be dropping Commodore support soon. No official release has been drawn up yet, but Jonathan Mines says that Arkanix is in transition. In an Email message to the LOADSTAR Letter, He confirmed:

"...Arkanix Labs has dropped "active" support of C64/C128. This means that we might come back sometime in the future, we may not - just depends if some projects get finished or not by outside groups. There are quite a few reasons, here are just a few:

No income, I have funded AL from my pocket for too long. Arkanix Labs was run off my own money, never have I taken a bank loan, etc. With only \$50 coming in for six months, what would you do?"

"No progress on named projects, all types of weird problems here. Namely one person constantly moving, no Email, no consistent work ethic. NetStack did make it pretty far. You could connect, send packets via SLIP. AVLink was really planned out quite a bit, but it never made it past that point. At the last moment we had decided on going GEOS only, because the Internet software really needs an OS which can handle bitmap graphics, and HTML like functions easily.

Development on NetStack & AVLink will continue, at what pace I don't know. Robin Harbron and Nate Dannenberg will try to keep the software alive. Arkanix Labs might sell the products if they're ever finished, we may not. The hardware (8BSS, DualSID, DigiMAX) will continue, but a person must order from Nate Dannenberg and then wait 2-4 months for the board to be finished & delivered.

I don't know the future of the other hardware he was working on, they were mainly prototypes from what I know.

MODplay (both 64 & 128 versions) is now public domain and available from Nate Dannenberg's

homepage.

I will have a much more info-packed press release ready for the "official" January 1998 announcement.

SuperCPU software?

By Robin Harbron. There is some software being developed for the SuperCPU - but it is coming along slowly. For the longest time, developers were waiting for extra RAM for the units. Now that's arrived, but I still haven't a decent assembler that supports the SuperCPU's full 65816 instruction set. Here're some of the various projects that I've heard of:

Mega Assembler - Maxim Szeneszy (sp?) c/o Mr.Lee - apparently this is a complete assembler for the SuperCPU. However, I have no idea how to obtain a copy, and from the reports I've heard, it has as frustrating a user interface as the Flash8 Ass Blaster, which is terrible. Brett Tabke, who wrote the excellent Introduction to the 65816 in Commodore World #16, has been working on an assembler for quite some time. He unfortunately was unable to work on it for a number of months, but is back on track with it now.

Jim Brain was apparently working on an assembler also, but I haven't heard a word about it for nearly a year.

MODplay 64 by Nate Dannenberg has been released to the public domain, following Arkanix Labs' decision to drop Commodore 64/128 support. This program is quite amazing. It allows the SuperCPU (with an REU attached) to play the popular Amiga/PC .mod format music files. The sound is surprisingly good considering it's multiple digital tracks being mixed down in real time to the SID - apparently it sounds even better with an extra sound chip that can be plugged into the user port. Note that MODplay 128 has also been released to the public domain, and does not require a SuperCPU, but only a REU + 80 column monitor.

SuperCPU Kicks is the name of a demo by Thunderblade/DMAgic. Apparently it does some pretty amazing bitmap manipulation, and requires 1 MB of RAM - I haven't seen this yet, but would love to.

Turbo Imploder is a file cruncher which apparently gives very good, and very fast results.

Project "G" apparently has some direct SuperCPU support - perhaps improved use of SuperRAM - or at least easier access for programmers.

I coded a FLI routine for the SuperCPU one evening. FLI is a software video mode

that uses some programming tricks to fool the VIC into displaying more colors per 8x8 block than it usually would. Normally, on a 1-MHz C64, this consumes nearly all the computer's processing time. However, with the SuperCPU, it is possible for this to be done on a line-by-line interrupt basis, freeing much of the processor time to do other tasks. Perhaps this code will be used to create a FLI game that would have quite amazing graphics - or perhaps someone will write their own.

I also made a quick and dirty sampler/playback program. This uses Nate Dannenberg's 8-BSS (eight-bit stereo sampler) which hopefully he'll be able to produce on his own, without Arkanix Labs. I estimate that it can sample at approximately 120 kHz with the SuperCPU enabled - a compact disc is usually only recorded at 44.1 kHz. *[Jeff's note: sampling much past 48Khz, typical of DATs, yields diminishing returns.]* With my 16 MB Ramcard, I was able to capture about 4.5 minutes of quite high quality audio. Finally, Netstack (if indeed it will still be called that) is being reworked. It will be SuperCPU specific, at least in its first incarnation. The main reason for this is to ease my burden of trying to get it to do so much, and still be very heavily optimized and fine tuned. It will still be written in 100% assembly, but the '816's powerful 16 bit indexing and arithmetic will help greatly with simplicity of coding, as well as efficiency, and the use of extra RAM will allow a much more full implementation of TCP/IP.

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Different Types of Commodore Users

By Robin Harbron. I've been using the Internet regularly for the last two years or so, and have finally come to the not-so-amazing conclusion that not all Commodore Users are the same. I didn't know this before, because the whole of my 8-bit existence was lived out in two arenas: with the friends I grew up with at school, and in the magazines I bought, read, and collected.

My friends and I all had the same interests: *playing* games, and *programming* games. And when they lost interest in those things, they also lost interest in their old computers. The magazines I read (especially the North American ones) had a bit of everything in them - programming, games, reviews, productivity programs - but I just read what interested me, and

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wondered why they printed all that other useless stuff.

But here we are, a full 9 years after I received my last Ahoy! magazine. I've become aware that these machines still have a faithful following. Some people even make a full-time living on them. But what was really even more surprising to me is that we are a very, *very* diverse bunch. When I refer to "we", I mean the entire Commodore community, not just the LOADSTAR Letter readership. Strangely enough, part of our community wouldn't even have the slightest bit of interest in reading LOADSTAR Letter.

I've met, or at least read the ramblings of, hundreds of Commodore Users over the past two years on the Internet. IRC (Internet Relay Chat) and the Usenet newsgroup comp.sys.cbm are quite full of conversation - and where there's conversation, there's usually "friendly" argument. I apologize if I've missed (or mis-represented) a group - but these are the people I see:

The Power Users. These people have setups that look like they should be the centerfold in Commodore World magazine. They defy anyone anywhere with any computer to beat their Commodore. Many of these people proudly claim to use only their trusty 8 (or maybe 16, nowadays) bit computer. And I think they're nearly right. The hardware isn't lacking, but unfortunately, the software is in some departments. I think the thing these people most want is a full Internet suite of software, and perhaps some related utilities, such as a pkunzip type program.

The Collectors. This group wants (at least) one of everything. Heard of a 203ILP? SFD1001? 128B? Got all the C= computer hardware around? Well, get yourself a C= calculator, a C= telephone, a C= filing cabinet, a C= clock - I've even heard of a Commodore umbrella now!

The Gamers know how to beat at least a hundred games each - just mention a game, and where you're stuck, and they'll have a solution to you in no time.

The Trivia Buffs have more answers than you have questions - often knowing all sorts of obscure facts not only about the computers and peripherals themselves, but also about the designers and companies behind each product. These people might also be called *The Historians*.

The Emulators. These folks love the games too - but most of them haven't even touched a real Commodore since 1988, but happen to stumble across a web site on the Internet full of pirated games, then bother the real users with questions about how to play these games on their emulators. The other annoying type of person in this class is the one who assumes that all the C64/128 ever

did *was* play games - this really annoys the *Power Users*.

The "Realists" insist that people who think Commodores are still real computers are fools - especially foolish are people trying to make money on them still. Often these people also claim that any software made for 8-bits is worthless - copyrights on this software should not exist, even if it was programmed this very year!

The Pirates love to illegally collect software. Included with this bunch are the people who actually "crack" the games, and distribute pirated software. I managed to get a copy of my "Frogs & Flies" game on the Internet before I got my actual LOADSTAR disk!

The Purists believe that a C64 system is a CPU/keyboard, a 1541 and a monitor, with a few joysticks. They strongly oppose adding extra equipment to their computers - but if cornered, they'll often admit to using a utility/fastload cartridge of some sort. But this is where their logic breaks down, in my thinking: if a fastload is allowed, why not JiffyDOS, so you get a fastload almost all the time? And if that, why not a faster disk drive? And if that, why not a faster modem, faster CPU? Usually they will then bring up the issue of cost for these extras. "I can buy a used 486 for the price of that stuff". Well, if you'd like that better, go ahead.

The SuperCPU receives the most flak from these people - some say it isn't even a C64 anymore. In my opinion, if it's got a VIC and SID, and powers up with that comfortable blue BASIC screen, it's a C64 - it's just a whole lot faster, and it's got a whole lot more memory (with the SuperRAM card installed).

The "Fanatics" have much the same attitude as the Power Users, but lack the money to expand their system into such enviable beasts. They stick with their old computer, with just a few meager additions, but promote their machine as much as they can, and help others when they can too - generally these are fairly sheltered people, mainly using software written in the mid-80's.

The Life-Long User is the sort that obtained their computer in the early or mid 80's, and has continued to use it - realizing that to jump ship to a newer platform will lead to an endless string of jumping and upgrading - if the goal is to always use what's newest. These people are generally satisfied with what they have, knowing that if it was good enough then, it's good enough now.

The Newbie just obtained a Commodore for the first time, and is trying to start the beginnings of a software collection, learning how to print and load things, and possibly wanting to program a bit in BASIC.

Demo Programmers are a strange bunch,

mostly. They'll spend weeks or months working on a program that does nothing - it might look and sound fantastic, but that's it. You don't do anything but watch and listen. "What a waste of effort and time and talent," some may cry - but I have to disagree. Demos do a number of positive things. They encourage people to think that our computers really aren't all that far away from today's expensive machines. If you've ever seen Downfall by Graham/Oxyron, you'll know what I'm talking about - our 16 year old computer is amazing. The demo scene is a training ground for young programmers.

Demos are something that actually get completed, because they are a form of art - the artist decides when the demo is complete. And when it comes down to it, most demo programmers aren't interested in doing anything else on their Commodore - if it's not demos, it's nothing. Incidentally, half of these people can't spell or punctuate properly, nor express themselves without constant reference to bodily functions - yet they can create some of the most amazing, efficient code ever.

Musicians/Artists make our machines come alive, making the absolute most of the VIC and SID. Fire up a game from the late 80's or early 90's, and then a game or two from '83 - it's totally amazing that this is the same machine - just shows what a difference talent and experience can do with a given medium.

Intellectuals. The people who will make 3D graphic libraries and music composition music systems for their C64 in their (not so) spare time, driven purely by the love of seeing something come to completion.

People who make Money. It amazed me that these people still exist. To them, their C= is a way of paying their rent or mortgage, feeding themselves and their family - or at least it's a profitable hobby. I've seen at least a few clashes between this group and the Pirates in the past year.

Hardware people just plain old frighten me. They seem to know absolutely everything about everything in these machines. They can diagnose which chip is fried in your computer without even seeing it, they control home security systems with their VIC-20 and now the guys at CMD have nearly completed their SuperCPU128 - amazing. These people have broadened my view of what a Commodore User is greatly - far beyond what I knew of growing up with my friends, and Commodore magazines. I've got at least one friend of every type listed here - and I fit into many of the categories

myself. If you don't have access to the Internet - seek out a user's group (even one through the mail) and expand your world.

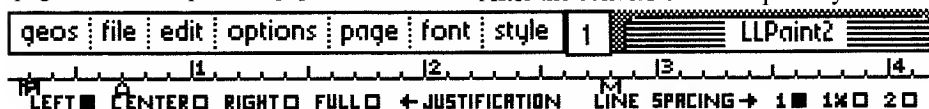
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Multiple Column Output with GEOS Paint Overlay.

By Bruce Thomas. Well, I had an idea that my 4-column newsletter screen shot in the last issue of the LOADSTAR Letter would draw some interest but I had no idea how much! This article will detail the steps it takes to create 3 or 4 column output using geoWrite, the Paint Overlay driver and geoPaint.

"We had people using the Paint drivers in ways we never anticipated. We basically created them so that you could do two-column output from Write. But some people have used the drivers to do color printouts (by adding color in geoPaint)." There you have it. Right from Brian Dougherty, founder of BSW and creator of GEOS, in the February 1989 issue of Commodore magazine. The Paint drivers were created to allow double column output and every article ever done (well OK, the two that I had seen) explained how to get two-column output. So how did I get a four column newsletter? Read on.

The place to start is with a pencil and paper and draw a sketch of what you want your page to look like. This is a very important step as, without planning, your page could end up looking quite bad. Do



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Multiple

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Well, I had an idea that my 4 column newsletter screen shot in the last issue of the Loadstar Letter would cause some interest but I had no idea how much! This article will detail the steps it takes to create 3 or 4 column output using geoWrite, the

Multiple Columns

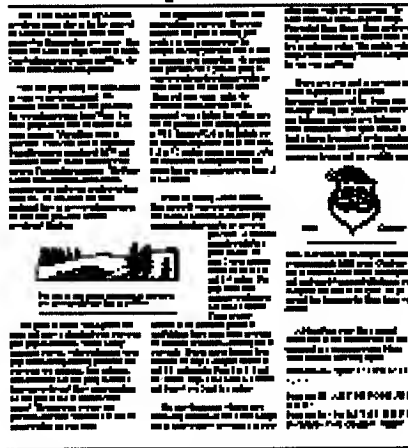


Figure A - 3 column newsletter.

you want two columns, three columns, four columns? Are you going to have a large title at the top? How many graphics do you plan to add to illustrate your points? The next step is to get into geoWrite and write whatever it is you are going to place on your page.

The biggest decision is likely how many columns you want. If you can determine this prior to writing your article it is much easier to get the margins the way you want than to have to reformat your pages later. Of course, with geoWrite V2.1 you are going to want to work on the full page width so make sure you set that first. Choose 'Make full page wide' under the OPTIONS menu and you will be presented with a dialog box telling you that the previous file is being converted to V2.1 format (V2.0 is the default but the margins only allow you to use from 1.2 to 7.2 inches across the page). After the conversion is completed you will

PAINT DRIVERS

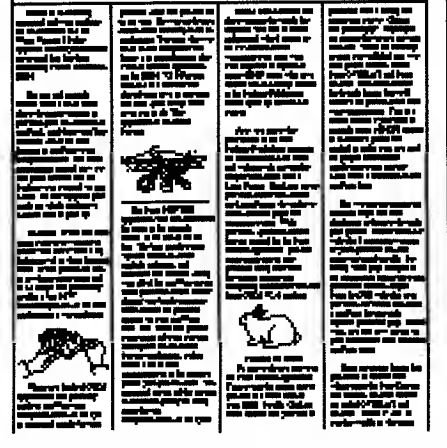


Figure A1 - 4 column newsletter

notice that your margins now go from .2 to 8.2 inches.

If you are making a three column flyer (see Figure A) you will want to set your margins at 0.3 and 2.8 inches on the first page (paragraph indent can be set however you wish - 2 tenths of an inch would be a good indent). On page 2 your margins would be set at 3.0 and 5.4 inches. For page three your margins would go at 5.6 and 8.1 inches. These settings (similar to the automatic gutters in geoPublish) leave some room between the columns of text for a dividing line if you wish. If your layout features four columns (see Figure A1) set Page 1 margins at the 0.3 and 2.1 inch marks, Page 2 at 2.3 and 4.1 inches, Page 3 at 4.3 and 6.1 inches and Page 4 at 6.3 and 8.1 inches.

The next decision is whether you want a big headline or not. I used a large one in mine to show how easy it is but it takes some work at the same time. To draw attention I used a 48 point Mega Font called Mega Roma. There are lots of Mega fonts available for GEOS users in lots of different styles. The trouble with Mega Fonts is that they weren't designed for use with geoWrite.

If you have ever tried to use a font that works in geoWrite in a geoPaint document and received the 'Sorry, font too large' dialog box you already know that different programs have different sized font buffers. The space needed to load a font is determined by the number of characters in the font (some only contain upper case letters) and the available point sizes. GeoWrite has the largest font buffer at approximately 6000 bytes. GeoPaint 128 is limited to fonts under 4500 bytes and geoPaint 64 and geoPublish max out at slightly less than 4100 bytes. To get around this limitation the Mega fonts were created.

A Mega Font is not like a normal

GEOS font in that all characters are not contained in a single point size. Mega Fonts have the following layout:

Point Size 48 - 'space' ! " # \$ % & ' () * + , - . /

Point Size 49 - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 : ; < = > ?

Point size 50 - A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O @

Point size 51 - P Q R S T U V W X Y Z [(backslash - C= /)] (up-arrow - SHIFT Up-arrow)

Point Size 52 - a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o

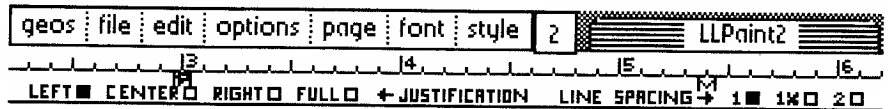
Point Size 53 - p q r s t u v w x y z (curly braces - C= : and C= ;) (vertical pipe - C= up-arrow) (tilde - C= @)

Point size 54 contains just garbage.

The beauty of a Mega Font is that the total size can be much larger than the font buffer would otherwise permit. GeoPublish handles juggling the different point sizes and only presents you with one size when you choose the font (you would only see Mega Roma 48 for example).

GeoWrite, on the other hand, is not Mega Font-aware so will show you all of the point sizes in the font file when you select Mega Roma. Hang on to this listing so that you can use the Mega Fonts easily in your projects.

Thankfully, geoWrite allows us to



This line is left blank

This line has one 48 pt space

This line is left blank

The biggest decision is likely how many columns you want. If you can determine this prior to writing your article it is much easier to get the margins the way you want than to have to reformat your pages later. Of course,

Figure C: The rest of the pages are similar to this one. Page 2 margins are visible. Blank lines leave room for a line to separate headline. 48 point space ensures text is same spacing from top of page as page one is.

format the margins of each individual paragraph independently. We will use this feature to place our headline in geoWrite. I set my font at Roma 12 point, margins as above for page 1, and then pressed RETURN three times. I moved my cursor back up to the second line, chose Mega Roma font and typed in my headline. As you do this you must select the individual point size where the character is located. To save some time I typed M in 50 point size, chose 52 point size and typed l, i and e and finally inserted the 53 point u, t and p in the appropriate places. This line also requires the margins to be set at the 0.2 and 8.2 inch marks and CENTER spacing to be chosen.

Move your cursor down to the last line and start typing your article. This will leave one blank line between your heading and your text (see Figure B).

As you near the bottom of page 1 you will have to insert a Page Break by choosing that option from the PAGE menu. This will move you onto Page two. For starters you will need to adjust your margins to the settings for Page 2 discussed above. Press RETURN three times and then position the cursor on the second line. Select Mega Roma 48 point size and press the SPACE bar. This will ensure that your lines of text are far enough down the page to leave room for your headline that is on Page 1. Move your cursor to the fourth line again and continue typing (see Figure C). As you get to the bottom of Page 2 insert another page break and follow the same procedure for the top of Page 3 as you did for the top of Page 2, but with the margins set at the Page 3 values. If you are doing a four column newsletter you will need to follow the same procedures again at the bottom of Page 3 and top of Page 4 using the Page 4 margin settings. Once you have all of your typing completed you are ready to 'print' your file.

Quit geoWrite and make sure you copy your file to a real disk if you are working in RAM or make a duplicate of it if you are working on a disk. This is always a good step to take prior to using any new procedure in case something goes wrong so you won't have to re-do all of your work. Choose 'select printer' under the GEOS menu and choose Paint Overlay as your printer driver. Make sure you have at least 40K bytes free on your disk.

Double click on your file again and,

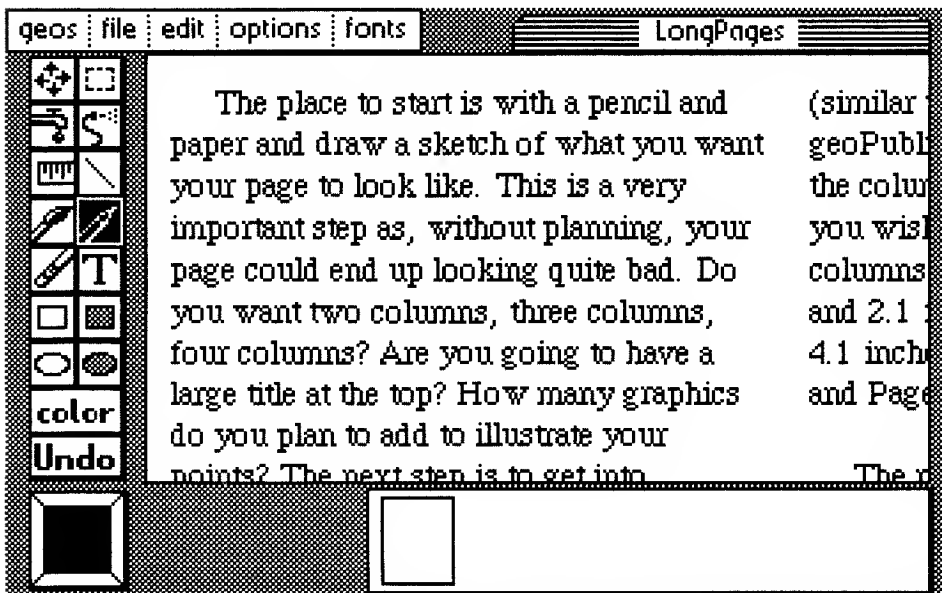


Figure D: Without using Page Breaks it is possible to cut off portions of your text at the bottom of the page.

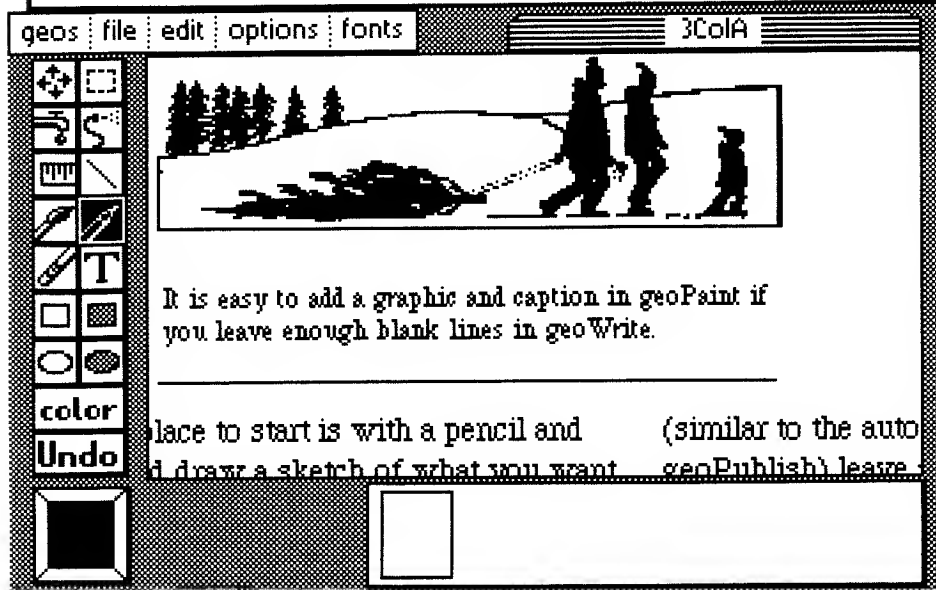


Figure E: Graphics can be wider than one column of text if you set your margins properly. It is also very easy to add captions in geoPaint.

once you are in geoWrite, choose PRINT under the File menu. You want to print Pages 1 to 3 or 4 in High Quality with Tractor Feed selected. Upon clicking OK geoWrite will act exactly the same as it does when you print to your printer but a file called OVERLAY is actually being created on your disk. When the 'printing' process is complete exit to the Desktop and re-select your regular printer driver with the Select Printer option again.

Rename the file on your disk called OVERLAY, save it to a real disk from your REU and then open it with geoPaint. What you will have is a Paint file containing your headline across the top and 3 or 4 columns of text beneath it. Check the bottom of the page to ensure that your text didn't get cut off in the process (see Figure D). The applications have different page lengths so you will have to experiment to find the ideal spot to place the Page Breaks in geoWrite. You can now dress up the page with column dividers and heading underscores for a nicely polished look.

Once you have mastered this easy process of creating columnar output you will no doubt want to spruce things up with pictures. Your rough sketch will help you decide where you want the pictures. To leave room in your geoWrite document you need to know how big the photo scraps will be. This is quite easy to determine by placing the scrap into geoPaint and using the measurement tool (the ruler icon third from the top in the left column).

GEOS has a vertical printing resolution of 72 dots per inch. If you are using a 12 point font you will need roughly

6 blank lines to fit a 1 inch graphic in the space. Of course, you are likely to want a caption under your picture so will have to allow space for that and perhaps a line to separate it from the body of your text (see Figure E). All of these things can easily be added in geoPaint if you leave the necessary space in geoWrite. The biggest scrap you can place in geoPaint is 1.8 inches tall so keep that in mind as you work.

As mentioned previously geoWrite gives you the option to set the margins for each individual paragraph. By using this feature you can have a graphic extend across more than one column but still have text beside it (see figure B). For details on this type of document formatting see the article in LL #46 on geoPublish.

If you wish to make a two page newsletter with four columns on each page then you have to set your margins properly. Page 5 of the geoWrite file would have the same margins as Page 1, Page 6 would be the same as Page 2, Page 7 like Page 3 and Page 8 like Page 4. When you have all of the pages set up properly then 'print' Pages 1 to 4 with the Paint Overlay driver. Rename the file (something like NewsPg1). Then 'print' Pages 5 to 8 with the Paint Overlay driver. Rename the file (NewsPg2 perhaps). These two files can then be modified in geoPaint by adding graphics and lines before printing them with your regular printer driver for a hard copy. You can also print multiple geoWrite files to the same OVERLAY file as long as you have your margins set correctly.

All in all, I hope you have a better appreciation of the power contained in the basic GEOS V2.0 package. While the system

is slow on a simple 64 system with a single 1541 drive it lets you do more than you could do with 2 or 3 other products combined. The more hardware you have the better the software will perform. EnGEOy it!

Supercharger

by Robin Harbron aka Macbeth/PSW.

Supercharger is a freeware tool to transfer binaries from the Commodore 64 to the Atari 2600, using the Arcadia/Starpath.

The Supercharger is an oversized Atari 2600 cartridge, that contains 6K of RAM, and has a cable that allows you to attach it to a cassette deck so you can load games from tape into your A2600. Instead, you can now hook your C64 up to your Supercharger.

Playbin will turn a binary in your C64 into audio that the Supercharger will then interpret. This allows you to develop your own A2600 games, right on your C64, with the Supercharger being the ONLY special piece of equipment.

Why would anyone want to use this program? Well, if you're a classic video game fan, surely the Atari 2600 ranks high on your list of favorites. If you can program the C64 in assembly, the Atari 2600 has exactly the same instructions - and you can use your favorite C64 assembler. Programming the Atari 2600 is extremely challenging - some may find it enjoyable. Additionally, this program can be used to play most of the 2K and 4K Atari 2600 cartridge ROMs that are circulating on the Internet.

For more information on A2600 and Supercharger coding, check out:

<http://www.primetnet.com/~nickb/atariprg.htm>

<http://www.novia.net/~rcolbert/super.htm>

The other cool links on those pages...

The Stella mailing list - subscribe at: <http://www.biglist.com/lists/stella/stella.html>

Need a Supercharger? I bought mine from an ultra cool, reliable guy (I'm a happy customer) named Dan Mowczan. Get ahold of him: dano@ic.net

Dan Mowczan
30235 Kelsey Dr.
Warren MI 48092

I was surprised at how little he charged, and I got my SC very quickly - it was brand new, still shrink wrapped! He had some other cool, brand new A2600, Colecovision

and C64 carts too, so ask him about those if you're interested.

Still to come: An integrated Playbin Macro Assembler! Elwix/Style will be modifying Style's version of Turbo Macro Pro (TMP) to assemble and directly play the binary out - a complete development tool, that will run completely on a stock C64. This is the same assembler that I used to develop Frogs & Flies 64 (featured on LOADSTAR #161).

All about comp.binaries.cbm

by Cameron Kaiser. Looking for home-grown Commodore software? There are a startlingly large number of distribution points for old or orphaned software, but not much new stuff.

Fortunately, a lot of the software people are developing right now for the Commodore 8-bits can be found on the Usenet newsgroup comp.binaries.cbm, and this little article will tell you enough to get you started.

What comp.binaries.cbm is: comp.binaries.cbm (c.b.c hereafter) is a moderated binaries-only newsgroup.

By binaries-only we mean that only programs or other binary postings will appear, and by moderated we mean that someone actually reads all the postings and determines whether they will be allowed.

The moderators for c.b.c are a diverse and changing lot. I'm one of them; there are a few others, but not very many.

What shows up on comp.binaries.cbm: Freely distributable, Commodore-related binaries suitable to all ages. That means no warez or cracks, no X-rated or otherwise nasty demos, no copies of DOOM (unless it could run on a 64), no registered editions of software and no discussion (with the sole exceptions of the FAQ and important announcements made by the administration).

The upshot of this is whatever you get from c.b.c is free to use and free to copy for your friends who might not get the group. And if you're really after warez, there's FTP sites and a few alt.binaries.* groups for that.

Here are some examples of recent postings:

- An Ella Fitzgerald digitized sample from John Iannetta
- A FOURCELL solitaire game by Rick Trissel
- A 3-D graphics demonstration by Steve Judd

Hardware schematics, PD software, archivers and other programs have also

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made their appearance on c.b.c. Things like shareware, emulators (as long as they are free or SW editions) and .d64s of PD/SW software are also possible and permitted postings.

How to download software from comp.binaries.cbm: Software on c.b.c is distributed like any other Usenet posting. An in-depth explanation of Usenet is beyond the scope of this short article, but suffice it to say that you can get all the software with any newsreader. If you have access to a Unix shell, the best newsreader in my not so humble opinion is Kim Storm's nn. nn is a fast newsreader that's just oozing with power, but if you find it too arcane, tin isn't bad either. Avoid Larry Wall's rn and trn like the plague. I love Perl, but there are

some utilities Larry wrote that should have hit the bitbucket long ago.

All software put on c.b.c is in UUencoded format. UUencoding is an ancient, trivial method of encoding binaries in text format. It is not the same as base64 or MIME-type encoding. MIME is not universally readable. UUencoding is.

Most ISPs that give you access to a Unix box will have 'uudecode' or a similar utility. Save the posting to your Unix account (see your newsreader's documentation), and then run uudecode on the text file (e.g. 'uudecode posting'). uudecode will create the file in your home directory, and you can use FTP, sz, sx, sy or a similar utility to transfer it to your PC

The Internet for Commodore C64/128 Users

2nd Edition

by Gaelyne R. Gasson

ISBN: 06-646-32207-9

The only Commodore C64/128 Internet reference guide, this 296 page manual takes you through hardware and software needed, how to get online and what you can do once you're there. It covers Email, World Wide Web, FTP, IRC, Telnet, Newsgroups, Commodore files, archives and much more.

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or 64.

If you aren't lucky enough to have access to a Unix prompt, all is not lost. Fuzzy Fox has written uuxfer, a native 64 program that will decode UUencoded files. If you have FTP access, it is under this directory:

<ftp://ftp.armory.com/pub/user/spectre/UTIL-C64>

Be sure to read its documentation file before trying to run it on something.

Posting to comp.binaries.cbm: There is a FAQ to go with this, which I recommend reading in addition. The FAQ is available from Jim Brain's FTP site:

<ftp://ftp.jbrain.com/pub/cbm/faq/cbm-binaries-faq.txt>

Briefly summarized, posting to c.b.c is no different than filing any other sort of posting to any other Usenet group, at least on your end. What actually happens is your posting is turned into E-mail, and sent to the moderators for review. Your posting *does not appear immediately*. In fact, it will probably be a few days before it does appear. There are only a few of us, and we don't spend our lives waiting for the newest piece of mail. Moreover, if you have a particularly obtuse news server, it may take a while for it to actually notice the posting.

When you post, we ask that the file already be in UUencoded format (the complement utility 'uuencode' will do that for you), and that you include a brief but

thorough description of what's in it. If it's an archive, don't just say "it's an archive"; tell us about the programs in it. And if it is an archive, use something common, like .lnx or .wra ... archiving in RLE-Huffman encoding-lossy is a certain way to sink a posting.

You can mail posts too, but I'm not going to say how here because there're a few quirks you must be mindful of. All of these quirks are in the FAQ, and we beg you passionately and more than a bit pleadingly to read it.

We need to review your submission to accept it, of course, and that might take awhile. Keep in mind your server may not send the mail immediately; we might not get the mail immediately; we might not be able to look at it immediately; we probably can't post it immediately and very likely it will not arrive at your news server for your perusal immediately. Remember that! (And see Troubleshooting if you're still not convinced.)

Getting software previously published in comp.binaries.cbm: There will one day be an official archive for c.b.c (but not today). You can get previous postings from your local news server, but this will put you at the mercy of your ISP. Basically, most news spools will hold old postings for a certain length of time before an automated system goes through and expires them (essentially marks them for purge). These old postings can be read by passing an option to your newsreader. For nn, invoking it like

nn -x comp.binaries.cbm

will retrieve all (every!) old posting on

c.b.c that your news server has archived. Larger ISPs (Concentric, AOL, Netcom) may hold postings for some time, as long as several weeks. Small ISPs with limited newsgroup space may expire articles as recent as a few days ago. Since this will affect your reading of other newsgroups, if you prefer reading news periodically instead of daily to keep up-to-date, you might want to consider a bigger ISP.

Troubleshooting: There are common reasons why something isn't showing in comp.binaries.cbm. Not all — in fact, very few — of these conditions are under the direct control of the moderation staff.

- We didn't approve it. If so, too bad. If you really want to know why, mail us and we'll tell you (but it is generally not policy to respond to all submissions, as the time involved can be prohibitive).
- We haven't gotten around to it yet. This is entirely possible.
- UUnet hasn't mailed us the submission yet. This could be a problem with your ISP posting the submission, or (unlikely) a UUnet service failure. In rare instances entire submissions have been sucked into the void because of similar mishaps, but probably the blame rests with your ISP in this case.

(UUnet generally handles the internal processing of moderated Usenet groups.) If your submission has been sadly blown away, ask us, and then repost if necessary.

These reasons would apply to any posting of any newsgroup.

- Our newsgroup hasn't injected it into the system yet. I use Concentric, which is a pretty fast posting agency, but other moderators might use smaller systems that may queue up postings instead of sending them immediately.
- Your newsgroup hasn't picked up the posting yet. If there are a fair number of computers between you and our posting news server, you will be waiting a fair number of minutes (hours, days) for it to arrive on your end.

If you don't have a 24-7 newsgroup, the posting will not appear until your news spool is next refreshed, and it may not appear even then.

We can only control the submissions process. If you have some problems or



Maurice Randall's Trading Card. Photo by T.W. Dutcher.

concerns, you can E-mail the moderators at cbm-binaries@bayview.com, an alias that sends to all the moderators. This alias is generously provided and maintained by William Ward, the previous c.b.c head moderator. However, in the cases of a slow network, our best advice is to lean on your ISP, and even that may not help.

So, if you're looking for what people are inventing for your good old C64, comp.binaries.cbm may be your best bet. There's an awful lot of support for 64s online, so look for the latest postings on c.b.c — and send your own!

Cameron Kaiser is an Information Technology Services Database Programmer.

Maurice Randall's 1992 Trading Card

This card was issued as part of the '92Flash Trading Card Set. This is the Chrysler LeBaron Coupe that Maurice races in the ARCA SuperCar Series. He hasn't raced in the last few years but plans to return to racing soon. If you know of any major corporation that would like to get some excellent nationwide exposure as well as a good deal of coverage on national television, Maurice is currently searching for a permanent sponsorship agreement. This car will be seen on television in many exciting races ranging from tracks such as Daytona, Atlanta, Talladega, Michigan and Pocono, as well as many smaller tracks. The sponsorship package includes complete coverage on the race car as well as the car hauler. This provides advertising not only during the races, but

also while the team travels to and from the races.

Project G: The Operating System Replacement for GEOS

Excerpts from Maurice Randall's Home Page. Foreword from Jeff. LOADSTAR has kept relatively quiet about Project G because mentioning it prematurely would surely cause a phone flood at CMD, not yet officially a part of Project G. CMD's lines are already swamped with SuperCPU 128 questions. Now everyone is talking about Project G and LOADSTAR readers shouldn't be left in the dark.

The release date has been pushed back for Project G. Sorry, but it won't be ready in time for Christmas '97, but it should be ready sometime shortly thereafter. So, enjoy Christmas for what it's meant to be, and not because of the computer industry.

In any case, Project G, the new upgrade to GEOS 2.0, has received a new name. The name will remain a secret until the final beta release is ready for testing. At that time, the name, along with the pricing and distribution method will be officially announced, and orders will be accepted.

Although the operating system name will be kept quiet for the time being, I'll announce that the new Desktop V3.0 that is included with the system will be renamed with its original name that it had when it first began life. It'll be known as the 'Dashboard'. As for Configure 5.0, it'll be called 'Toolbox', since it allows you to tinker with your system somewhat.

The initial release of Project G will

require that the user owns an original GEOS 64 V2.0 disk. There is a legal reason for this. Project G currently cannot be released as a stand alone product, at least not until the rights to do so are granted by GeoWorks, but must be sold as an upgrade to an existing product. GeoWrite and geoPaint won't be included with the package, which is another reason for needing GEOS 2.0.

Keep an eye on this site for the official unveiling of the new operating system as well as the release date.

One of the most important applications that is currently being worked on is a new programming package. This includes an integrated assembler and linker in one application, unlike the GeoProgrammer of old which were two separate applications. The first version of the application is currently in beta testing. A more advanced version will be developed from this program that will require the SuperCPU with a SuperRAM card for its operation. This version will allow the bigger apps to be created more easily as it will allow larger symbol tables and larger .rel files. Plus it will have the ability to completely load the source code into memory and do the complete assembly and/or linking before writing it back to disk. It will be a more productive environment for the programmer.

The standard (non-SuperCPU) version allows approximately the same number of symbols as the current GeoAssembler and GeoLinker and will only allow 8-bit 6502 code. It also has the same limit of 20 characters in a symbol or label with only the first 8 being unique. On the other hand, the SuperCPU version will also allow 65816 code and all 20 characters in the symbols and labels can be unique. The only drawback is that if you take advantage of the extra features, your code might not be usable on the standard assembler.

The SuperCPU version will also take advantage of Project G's new function that gives an application its own Desktop control. What this means is that an application can have control of the system in a way that it can load and run other applications and when those applications exit, control will return to the application in charge. This function of Project G also allows third party Desktops to easily

install themselves as the default Desktop. For the programming environment, this has the advantage of being able to load the programmer's favorite text editor such as geoWrite for editing source code. It also allows the programmer to test the application that is being worked on without having to exit to the Desktop.

In addition to the assembler/linker combo, the programming package will include all the new information that is needed for a programmer to write new applications for Project G, including many sample source code files and library files.

The price has not been set on this package yet, but availability should be sometime during the first quarter of 1998.

GEOS Conference On Genie

November 25, 1997. Thanks to the December Comm-Adore newsletter for this transcript. I (Jeff) edited the dialogue for continuity.

Maurice: Just so you all know, there will be a V2.1 patch for geoFAX soon. I'm almost done with it. You can download the patch from my BBS and just run the program. It will patch your 2.0 copy. The main thing in the patch is to fix the auto answer mode and the phonebook when in 64 mode. Everyone that has geoFAX has a modem! So downloading a patch is an easy way to distribute it. geoFAX works with gateWay after you run the gateWay patch that is supplied with geoFAX. That patch fixes a bug in gateWay. I'll probably put the patch on my web Site also. The problem with gateWay is that it locks up when it sees a geoFAX printer driver in the directory.

Steve: I'm ready to throw out Gateway as soon as I can get your new GEOS OS:)

Maurice: I'm working on the new OS tonight, in fact. And it now has an official name. But sorry, it's a secret. I've been working on the copiers (file and disk) mostly for the last week. I added a little extra to the file copier that if it finds a file of the same name on the

destination, you have the option of copying and renaming.

Doctor: I wish the Macintosh did that.

Dan: Yeah, the more "advanced" computers are still dumb. :P

Bill: is a 128 version still in the future?

Steve: Say you're not leaving Genie Maurice. Maybe it's just a bad dream?

Maurice: Steve, it's true. I'm also fixing one last bug in my 1571 driver. The bug only occurs with 128D drives.

Snogpitch: Any chance of getting a driver for the MSD drives? I'd love to have my MSD run GEOS.

Maurice: I've thought about the MSD and also the Lt. Kernal. Both are possible future candidates, but not in this release.

C128.LOU: Cool. Now I know my LTK40 isn't worthless.

Dan: I know a few people in my club that have MSD drives that would love to use it.:)

Maurice: Actually, I can add additional disk drivers at any time. It doesn't have to be a complete upgrade. The parallel drivers are already supported. They are noticeably faster too. The same driver can do either serial or parallel. The driver detects which to use in the version I have here. I've got a lot of little minor details to work on still.

Randy Harris: YES!

Bill: somebody explain parallel drivers for the CMD HD please>

Doctor: They're for the RAMLink and HD combination. You can hook up a parallel cable between the RAMLink and RD for faster transfer. It's the port that should of come with the Commodore.

Bill: and it makes GEOS faster? I have that combo, HD and RL and parallel cable.

Robert Bernardo: Maurice, now that Project G for the C64 and 128 are delayed, is there any hope for a graphical web browser for the Wave?

Maurice: If I do the web browser, Project G must come first. I *won't* write one for GEOS 2.0. It's gotta be this new system.

Dan: You know Maurice, you can make me drool better than anyone else.

Robert Bernardo: How successful must Project G be for you to consider more work on the web browser?

Maurice: Robert, the success of Project G is going to determine a lot of things. Personally, I think it will go over well. And if my interest remains, I'll keep on working on stuff.

Robert Bernardo: That's excellent news, Maurice!

Bill: I would think that Project G would be a great success

C128.LOU: Does Project G default to a mouse? (That always drove me nuts)

Maurice: Yes, the mouse is the default, but your first installation will ask you which input driver to use. Otherwise, it still uses the first one found if you choose to do differently later on. And also, Toolbox (formerly Configure) installs the drivers at bootup now. And by the way, the Desktop has now been renamed back to the Dashboard. I've got to finish a few more routines before turning it on.

The disk copy functions can copy between partitions now and also copy different size native partitions as long as the source has less data than the destination can hold.

Robert Bernardo: Maurice, by the year 2000, how do you envision the state of computing with GEOS?

Maurice: GEOS is evolving. Maybe this new OS is only the start. We will see. There's a lot that can be done that we haven't done yet.

C128.LOU: Maurice, will Project G run at a reasonable speed without a SuperCPU?

Maurice: It's acceptable without a SuperCPU. A geoRAM is a little bit sluggish, but not bad.

Robert Bernardo: Are you saying that Project G is only one step in its constant evolution?

Maurice: With the SuperCPU, Project G could evolve into a real powerful system.

C128.LOU: I have a SCSI-capable flatbed scanner, Maurice, and needless to say it would be interesting...

Maurice: Your scanner could be used with the 64, it just needs an application to be written for it.

C128.LOU: Yes, I know. From the hardware standpoint, all is available NOW.

Maurice: We need more programmers, Lou.

C128.LOU: I even considered calling Mustek and asking them.

Maurice: When I first started with geoFAX, I called Boca and some others. They didn't know beans about how their modems worked. I'll bet it would be easier to write a scanner interface than a fax program.

Robert Bernardo: Since I don't have geoFAX yet, what current modems do you recommend, Maurice?

Maurice: Robert, any ZOOM with Class 2 is good. The US Robotics with Class 2.0, and the Bocas with Class 2 and any other with Class 2 and at least 16K of ram.

Robert Bernardo: Thanks.

Maurice: geoFAX is \$39.95 plus \$4 shipping. Your club can get a discount on 6. Randy, what'd I give your club, was it \$34?

Randy Harris: Yes, it was either \$35 or \$34 for a six pack. We sold all six!

Brenda: Maurice, will we need GEOS to use Project G or will it be stand alone?

Maurice: If your club orders 6 geoFAXes, you get them for \$34 each with free shipping. Because of copyright stuff, Project G will have to be installed from GEOS 2.0 and it will check for an original 2.0 disk, not a geoMakeBoot'd disk. Eventually, I hope to get the rights from GeoWorks. I'm working on it. Then I can't make it a stand alone product.

Randy Harris: That would be great!

Dan: Do you know if someone buys Project G for the first time if the original GEOS will be included?

Brenda: Doesn't CMD have the rights?

Dan: No, Geoworks.

Randy Harris: CMD has rights to distribute, but must pay a royalty to Geoworks.

Maurice: CMD has the rights to distribute GEOS 2.0. This new OS is my product with some leftover code from 2.0 in it. Most of it is my own code. The Dashboard and Toolbox are entirely mine and the new OS won't run without Toolbox. About 80 percent of the OS itself is my own code.

Dan: No matter what way you slice it, Project G sounds cool! :)

Brenda: Will they want to give up that \$\$ from CMD selling it?

Maurice: GeoWorks doesn't care about the royalties they get because of the small market.

Dan: WOW! That is surprising!

Maurice: I currently do have the rights to what I have written, but can only sell it as an upgrade and not a standalone product. So, CMD will likely sell more GEOS 2.0 disks. This is good though because some

things (very few) may only run with 2.0.

Brenda: So you would be going for the entire rights? I mean, are you asking to get the full (c), or just the right to sell a stand alone product without getting sued:)

Maurice: I'm trying to get the rights to the standalone version, Brenda, right, without any trouble being caused.

Dan: So, if I ask for Project G, I would have to buy GEOS 2.0? In that case the total price would be over \$100, just to get it (If I don't already have GEOS). I am not speaking for myself; some people in my club were waiting for Project G before they go into GEOS.

Maurice: Unfortunately, Dan that's the way it has to be. But it won't cost that much. You will need GEOS 2.0 anyway, because Project G won't be supplied with geoWrite and geoPaint. Make sense now?

Brenda: Do you plan to re-do those?

Maurice: Yes, but not right away. I would definitely need permission for those, I think.

Dan: My members are not going to like this news. ☹

Brenda: Tell them, SUPPORT YOUR COMMODORE!

Maurice: Everybody should Email GeoWorks. Tell them we still have Commodore supporters out here.

C128.LOU: I would think that most C= users have GEOS V2.0 by now, anyhow

Maurice: Right, my biggest market will be current GEOS owners. Not new ones.

Brenda: Will Project G be enhanced for the SuperCPU?

Maurice: Project G automatically detects the SuperCPU. Eventually, I'd like to do a version just for the SuperCPU.

Randy Harris: A 16 bit version?

Maurice: Yes, the SuperCPU version would be 16 bit. Don't hold me to this, but

the price of Project G is going to be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$35. Even if you have to buy GEOS 2.0, it's affordable.

Randy Harris: Maurice, what made you decide to make Delphi your home, and not Genie?

Maurice: The Email is easier to use on Delphi, plus I've got better and cheaper Internet access. And I can test graphical browser stuff there, if you know what I mean. And I just can't justify the \$20 for Genie anymore.

C128.LOU: I have Delphi's \$34 a year plan

Maurice: It only costs me \$13 on Delphi. But I'm not trying to plug Delphi here, that's not the object. On Delphi, I can sign on in text mode or graphical mode, either one. Nowadays, there seems to be much more Commodore activity on Delphi, although it's not all related to our computers.

Randy Harris: I used to have Delphi, but I hated the upload process, and there was a lot more Commodore action here on Genie.

Maurice: The file library is the one drawback compared to Genie. Genie is much nicer for uploading and downloading.

Howie: yea, Genie's Library is a treasure

Maurice: Just to prevent a Qlink fiasco, I have downloaded the entire Genie library.

Bill: how many megabytes is that?

Maurice: It's not as much as you think. About 140 megs. At 14.4 on Genie, it wasn't too bad. Took me about 3 weeks. QLink's library was about four times this size.

Brenda: How is your Zip/HD stuff coming?

Maurice: Brenda, you mean that program to allow switching disks?

Brenda: I said, "WHY? I already have a computer"

Howie: then you don't need enemies

Brenda: I have the internal Zip hooked up. That's as far as I went.

Brenda: (hooked up as the main unit that is)

Maurice: The internal is the way to go. Just hit reset, right?

Brenda: Yup!

Howie: you 2 zippy guys...

Brenda: I don't have any other drive hooked up to it. To me, I would think it would be more of a hassle than it is worth

Brenda: I mean any other, as in ADD DRIVE

Maurice: What would be neat would be an autoloader program on the HD that would patch into the interrupt routine and detect when a disk was changed.

Howie: and you can swap disks too, right/

Brenda: If you don't put another drive on it Howie, you can swap disks. If you do have another drive, you have to always keep the same partitions.

Maurice: Currently, when I change disks, I reload the partition table for the disk that is inserted.

Brenda: (I suppose you could work around it, but that would be for advanced users)

Maurice: I want to write an ML program to do it, it would be faster.

Brenda: Cause you have an external, right Maurice?

Maurice: Yes, mine is external.

Howie: so Genie fits onto 2 zips...

Brenda: So you have it as an ADD

DRIVE, the second in the chain.

Maurice: I might do it the way you did with the internal. That's the best way, I think.

Maurice: Genie would fit onto 100 FD-2000 disks.

Brenda: Do you think it is worth trying to go 100 meg +, or just forget adding a drive?

Brenda: I don't think the average user can handle loading partition tables

Maurice: And to think that my new version of GeoProgrammer is only 32K!

Howie: gads.... that's immense! I recall programmers agonizing over saving 1 or 2 jiffies, and working on the problem for days at a time

Maurice: And I still look for a savings of a byte here and a byte there. Windows programmers would think I'm nuts.

Brenda: Would you guys think it was reasonable to put an internal Zip on the CMD HD and not worry about the lost hard drive, or should we find a way to use that drive?

Maurice: Heck, go for the JAZ.

Robert Bernardo: Maurice, back to geoFAX, are there any current fax machines that you can recommend?

Maurice: Any of the new fax machines are good, Robert. For using them as scanners, the best way to check them out is go to the office supply store and try them out using the copy function in halftone mode..Take some clip art and photographs with you and see which ones produce the best results.

Maurice: The copies will look like what you can capture with geoFAX.

Howie: hey nifty

Robert Bernardo: thanks, again. You've answered some of my last questions.

Maurice: See which ones interpret the colors the best

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Maurice: Pay attention to the type of dithering that they use also. Some will look like the dithering that geoGIF uses and other will use another method.

Robert Bernardo: Consumer Reports did a report on fax machines some time ago. Should that be my starting point, Maurice?

Maurice: No, just go down and look at them and see which ones *you* like the best. Consumer Reports will tell you which ones someone else likes the best.

Maurice: Check out the bubblejet faxes too. If you get a thermal paper job, make sure it has anti-curl like the Sharp model and you'll like the paper Cutter built in.

Bill: I don't have a need for anything like that now my HD40 and RL with 16 megs gives me all the mom I need for now

Brenda: Lou, I've got a zipdrive hooked up to the CMD HD by itself!

Maurice: I would like to pull out the 40 that is in mine and put in the internal ZIP like you have.

Brenda: I did a bad job on the survey... good thing I am buffering this. I shoulda just asked one question. Does anyone want a removable drive on the C=?

Howie: but I nevertheless did have an opinion

Bill: Maurice, where will I find out the latest on your projects in the future?

Maurice: <http://people.delphi.com/arca93/> or The Speed Zone BBS at 517-322-2386

Maurice Randall

P.O. Box 606426

Sumpter St.

Charlotte MI 48813

Ph: (517) 543-5202

arca93@delphi.com

<http://people.delphi.com/arca93/>

Vocabulary lesson for non-engineers

Engineer says: A number of different approaches are being tried

Engineer means: We are still grasping at straws

Engineer says: We're working on a fresh approach to the problem

Engineer means: We just hired three kids fresh out of university

Engineer says: Close project coordination

Engineer means: We know who to blame

Engineer says: Major technological breakthrough

Engineer means: It works OK, but looks very hi-tech

Engineer says: Customer satisfaction upon delivery is assured

Engineer means: We are so far behind schedule that the customer is happy to get it delivered

Engineer says: Preliminary operational tests were inconclusive

Engineer means: The darn thing blew up when we threw the switch

Engineer says: Test results were extremely gratifying

Engineer means: We are so surprised that the stupid thing works

Engineer says: The entire concept will have to be abandoned

Engineer means: The only person who understood the thing quit

Engineer says: It is in progress

Engineer means: It is so wrapped up in red tape that the situation is hopeless

Engineer says: We'll look into it

Engineer means: Forget it! We have enough problems for now

Engineer says: Please read and initial

Engineer means: Let's spread the responsibility for the mistake

Engineer says: Give us the benefit of your thoughts

Engineer means: We'll listen to what you say as long as it doesn't interfere with what we've already done

Engineer says: Give us your interpretation

Engineer means: I can't wait to hear this!

Engineer says: See me/Let's Discuss

Engineer means: Come into my office, I'm lonely

Engineer says: All new!

Engineer means: Parts not interchangeable with the previous design

Engineer says: Rugged

Engineer means: Too heavy to lift!

Engineer says: Lightweight

Engineer means: Lighter than rugged

Engineer says: Years of development

Engineer means: One finally worked

Engineer says: Energy saving

Engineer means: Achieved when the power switch is off

Engineer says: Low maintenance
Engineer means: Impossible to fix if broken

David Schmoll 1955-1997

By Gaelyne Gasson. There are times when all the words in the world just won't do, and this is one of them.

I recently learned David Schmoll died earlier this month. I created a memorial Web page for him at <http://video-cam.net.au/~gaelyne/dschmoll.html> for those who'd like to have a way to remember David, and to say goodbye.

David Schmoll died early November, 1997. This page offers those who knew him a way to say goodbye, and gives us a place to grieve.

David and I shared a great deal of private mail (Email and Netmail) over the last 5 or 6 years, and although we never met in person. I considered him a friend. He helped me through a difficult time when my mother was dying... not by offering cliches, but by listening and sharing some of the rough times he went through in his own life. I know he's helped many other Commodore users in similar situations.

I admit I don't know much about David's life prior to five or six years ago, but I know he worked as a stage hand for bands, working as a stage lighting director, and played bass guitar. One of his musical heroes was Yes bass player Chris Squire. When he first started posting messages in the Fidonet CBM echos in the early 90's, he would often comment that he practiced his bass guitar skills while reading the mail and thought it would be neat to figure out a way to use a foot pedal to change the messages on the screen so he could keep playing. In the early 90's, David stopped touring to care for his aging parents, and that's when the Commodore online

community met David. Both of his parents had Alzheimers disease, requiring increasing amounts of his attention. He was their sole caretaker for the remainder of their lives. Getting online and participating in conversations about the Commodore computer, and later using Email, allowed him a break from his day, and gave him access to the world outside the family home.

His mother passed away in 1992 or 1993 (I'm uncertain), and his father died in late 1995. I've always admired David, that he could put his life on hold to care for his parents, doubly so when I learned he was adopted. Unfortunately, aside from programming, he wasn't able to pick up the pieces of his own life after dedicating so many years to caring for his parents.

David loved automation, and went to great lengths to make his computing time as automated as possible. Because of this love, he created several programs to suit his needs and luckily, he shared some of them with the rest of the Commodore community.

Using scripts in Dialogue128 (a term program), he created his own "hands off" method of downloading mail from Fidonet BBS's and later from his Internet source, NYX in Denver, Colorado.

David modified Bill Lucier's unzip64 program so it would work in C128 mode (NZP128) and wrote a small program named QPE (based on Russell Prater's QPX program) to automate unzipping his QWK mail packets, and included it within the NZP archive. Later, he expanded QPE so it would work in C64 mode for QWKie users.

On a similar vein, he developed a menu program (EZLoader) that includes several automatic features, such as the ability to run programs at certain times and the ability to run several programs one after another. His goal (which he achieved) was to automate his system so it would load his term program, dial the BBS or Internet provider, transfer his mail, dissolve the files using

NZP, and have his mail reader program loaded and waiting for him when he got up in the morning.

In the months before his death, David worked on updates for NZP, and finished a new version of EZLoader, which remains unreleased. This version has several additional features (some that have never been implemented on the Commodore until he tried it). Only time will tell whether this update will be released to the public or not.

David wasn't perfect. He was often very opinionated about the way he felt things should be, and often expected more of people, computers, and programs than they could give, but this also made a difference in the type of programs he wrote.

Although he probably didn't realise it, David had an effect on the lives of many Commodore users, especially those who use their computers online and who use his EZLoader menu program. It's the first program I see on my C128 in the morning and the last one I see at night when I turn it off, and has been for many years. Each time I see it now, I am reminded of how much I will miss sharing Email with David.

Situation Normal

I misspelled the names on Bruce Thomas and Maurice Randall last issue. Also, on issue #50, I flubbed on CMD's question line, which is 1-413-525-0023.

Why Is The Text A Half-Point Smaller Issue?

By Jeff Jones. Last minute printer problems forced me to use a different printer to print this newsletter. That printer could print as close to the edge of a page as I'm normally used to, so I had to quickly reduce the margins in order to fit everything — as you can see I barely did!



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You Know You're In Arizona When

- ☺ You've signed so many petitions to recall governors that you can't remember the name of the incumbent.
- ☺ You notice your car overheating before you drive it.
- ☺ You can say Hohokam and people don't think you're laughing funny.
- ☺ You no longer associate bridges (or rivers) with water.
- ☺ You see more irrigation water on the street than there is in the Salt River.
- ☺ You know a swamp cooler is not a happy hour drink.
- ☺ You can say 115 degrees without fainting.
- ☺ You can be in the snow, then drive for an hour and it will be over 100 degrees.
- ☺ You have to go to a fake beach for some fake waves.
- ☺ You discover, in July, that
- ☺ You run your air conditioner in the middle of winter so you can use your fireplace.
- ☺ You notice the best parking place is determined by shade instead of distance.
- ☺ You realize that Valley Fever isn't a disco dance.
- ☺ Hotter water comes from the cold water tap than the hot one.
- ☺ You can pronounce the words: "Saguaro", "Tempe", "Gila Bend", "San Xavier", "Canyon de Chelly", "Mogollon Rim", "Cholla", and Tlaquepaque".
- ☺ It's noon in July, kids are on summer vacation, and not one person is moving on the streets.
- ☺ You actually burn your hand opening the car door.
- ☺ Sunscreen is sold year round, kept at the front of the checkout counter, a formula less than 30 spf is a joke, and you wear it just to go to Circle K.
- ☺ Some fool can market mini-

it only takes two fingers to drive your car.

You can make sun tea instantly.

misters for joggers and some other fools will actually buy them.

☺ Hot air balloons can't go up, because the air outside is hotter than the air inside.

☺ No one would dream of putting vinyl upholstery in a car.

☺ You can understand the reason for a town named "Why."

for a complete disguise this time, haircut and new color, new outfit, big sunglasses, then waited a few days before she again approached the salesman. "I would like to buy this TV."

Sorry, we don't sell to blondes," he replied. Frustrated, she exclaimed, "How do you know I'm a blonde?"

"Because *that's* a microwave," he replied.

My First Unsolicited Email Blonde Joke

A blonde went to the appliance store sale and found a bargain. "I would like to buy this TV," she told the salesman. "Sorry, we don't sell to blondes," he replied.

She hurried home and dyed her hair, then came back and again told the salesman "I would like to buy this TV." "Sorry, we don't sell to blondes," he replied.

"Darn, he recognized me," she thought. She went

LOADSTAR LETTER #52

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